The man who, having abandoned all desires, acts without covetousness, selfishness, or pride, deeming himself neither actor nor possessor, attains to rest. —*The Bhagavad-Gita*

THEOSOPHY

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MASTER OF THINE OWN MERCY

A MAN who is master of his own mercy is a man who knows what to do. All men on the path feel unutterable longing, but the man who has reached the level of certainty described by this phrase is able to put his longing to work for others without feeling of waste or loss.

What does "Master of thine own Mercy" mean? If we take "mercy" to signify compassion, then to be master means to be able to direct it unerringly to the needs of others. This is not possible without some ability to read their hearts.

How does a man learn to read another man's heart? Not, surely, by investigating his "secrets." No one of true compassion would ever do this. It results rather from an enlarged capacity to practice the first principle of Occultism—to put oneself in the place of another. Modern thought gropes after this ability in its frequent use of terms such as "identify" and "empathize."

> For this, thou hast to live and breathe in all, as all that thou perceivest breathes in thee; to feel thyself abiding in all things, all things in SELF.
>
> Thou shalt not let thy senses make a playground of thy mind.
>
> Thou shalt not separate thy being from BEING, and the rest, but merge the Ocean in the drop, the drop within the Ocean.
>
> So shalt thou be in full accord with all that lives; bear love to men as though they were thy brother-pupils, disciples of one Teacher, the sons of one sweet mother.

A man who is "master of his own mercy" has made these injunctions the law of his being. When he encounters another man in need, he sees at once the divine potentiality in that other, but also the immediate areas of his growth. "Divine potentiality" is not only the promise of the full glory of the Adept. It is in every tiny increment of self-discovery and self-direction. To see this is to recognize the implication of: "The Path is one for all, the means to reach the goal must vary with the Pilgrims."

The master of his own mercy has a profound sense of the variability of the means. Yet this understanding leads to no presumption. He reads hearts yet does not read them. "The Teacher," he knows, "can but point the way." There are times of common instruction, and also times when each one "will have to travel on alone." The one who is master of his own mercy has learned when to speak and when to keep silent. Coleridge put this well: "Veracity does not consist in saying, but in the intention of communicating, truth."

The one who has not his own senses under control cannot expect to be master of his own mercy. Without control of the senses, he is not in charge, yet, of his own life. Exposed to external forces or influences, he experiences fear. Fear shuts out awareness of others' needs. The fearful man has difficulty in not seeing a threat in others who seem to have more control, or power, than he has. With these, again, he acts only with difficulty out of compassion. He might like to show "mercy," but he tries to protect himself. Fear, for organized groups, becomes the denouncer of heresy. The result of an organized settlement with fear is the sect.

> Fear, O Disciple, kills the will and stays all action. If lacking in the Shila virtue—the pilgrim trips, and Karmic pebbles bruise his feet along the rocky path.

Shila is the Key of Harmony in word and act. It leaves no further room for Karmic action. To make one's own life conform to the symmetries of the doctrine—the Word—is a long and difficult task. It is a tendency of fear to make one blame others for the shadow of oneself outside the Path. They do not see the symmetries we see; their ways are different. Their confidence is placed in other visions, they follow other words. Yet not for one, but for all, it was recorded: "Long and weary is the way before thee, O Disciple." All men suffer from the shadow of their mortal coil—"that pregnant cause of anguish and illimitable pain."

Mercy or compassion flows freely only when liberated from the constraints of fear. It knows nothing of wishing or anxiety. Faith in the law replaces fear in the man who is master of his own mercy. Impatience has no part in his life. He knows that all men will find their way in their own good time, and those whom he is destined to help will come to him under karma. He need not fear for the others, any more than he fears, now, for himself.

It follows that only an unexpecting man can read the hearts of others. Since he speaks without pressing, hearts have a tendency to open to him. Since he has no yearning to "convert," his integrity and fearlessness attract the wondering of other men. He stirs no fear in them. Conversation with him becomes a colloquy of souls.

He knows no tearful nights or longing days. He does not burst with personal feeling for the world. He is not sorry for himself. He does not struggle with the bonds of his weakness as though they were placed upon him by other hands. He makes no exhibition of his love, which is of no more interest to him than his breathing. All men love, even as all men breathe, and his love, being without bias, has become a wholly natural thing.

Sage Advice

The "struggle for existence" applies to the physical, never to the moral plane of being. . . . It is not the policy of self-preservation, not the welfare of one or another personality in its finite and physical form that will or can ever secure the desired object and screen the Society from the effects of the social "hurricane" to come; but only the weakening of the feeling of separateness in the units which compose its chief element. And such a weakening can only be achieved by a process of *inner enlightenment*. It is not violence that can ever insure bread and comfort for all; nor is the kingdom of peace and mutual help and charity and "food for all," to be conquered by a cold, reasoning, diplomatic policy. It is only by the close brotherly union of men's inner Selves, of soul-solidarity, of the growth and development of that feeling which makes one suffer when one thinks of the suffering of others, that the reign of Justice and equality for all can ever be inaugurated.

—H. P. Blavatsky

THOUGHTS IN SOLITUDE

IV

AS said Solomon the wise, "there is no new thing under the sun." Our thoughts are but the thoughts of preceding ages. That this must be so will be apparent when one considers the Eternity behind. All possibilities of nature must have been realized and all thoughts thought in the—to us—dim past. And while the wheel of evolution still turns this must be so. At the apex of the orbit in each revolution, a few of the greatest souled ones have attained emancipation, a few have been able to lift the latch of the Golden Gate. But the remainder of the candidates in nature's school who have failed at the final test have again to begin the weary round, along with those evolving from lower conditions, with only so much light to guide them through the labyrinth of life as may have been enshrined in the traditions or religions evolved during the previous efflorescence of Humanity. How are they to regain the thoughts of the past and obtain some true interpretation of the mystery of life? All thoughts indeed are writ in the Akasa from which the Prophets and Poets of all ages have drawn their inspiration, and in proportion to a man's striving to get below the mere surface of things, will be the degree in which he succeeds in making part of that inheritance of the ages his own possession.

The scholar too would seem to have a part to play. What worthier object can be his than that of rendering intelligible in the speech of his epoch, the thoughts and ideas enshrined in the dead languages of the great thinking races of the past? The scholars of to-day, those who have drunk deep at the wells of Sanscrit and Greek learning, have indeed a heavy responsibility upon their shoulders. Were it not a worthier aim of life to make common property the thoughts and ideas of the sublime ancients than to wrap themselves as so many do—though there are one or two notable and glorious exceptions—in the self-gratulation of exclusive culture and stagnate in the memory of past achievement?

Those too who are animated by the Theosophic spirit, and who

NOTE.—This article was first printed by Wm. Q. Judge in the *Path* for May, 1887.

feel the supreme desirability of the path they are striving to tread, are bound to find words more or less appropriate to carry to the world a conviction of this supreme desirability, words which may convey some idea of the animating life within which is quite as much an embodiment of the scientific spirit of the seeker after truth, and the single-eyed determination of the man of the world to achieve his object, as of any devotional or religious feeling. Religion—in Christian countries at least—has been made far too much a thing of sentiment, it has its use no doubt in prompting to the initial effort, but when the path is chosen it would seem that single-heartedness of aim and firm determination were the dominant qualities required.

The thought that prompted the present paper was expressed in a footnote written by a friend in that mystical work of the middle ages "Theologia Germanica." The text expresses the thought that all that is, is well pleasing and good in God's eyes, while the footnote by citing one out of the many instances of earthly action so diametrically opposed to what the most optimistic could consider as pleasing to God, commands as the necessary corollary to the text its converse proposition.

Search as deeply as we may into Nature's life, and obtain though we may some intuition of the love which may be regarded as "creation's final law," that law in its working throughout all objective existence must still appear to us as unutterably hideous. The cosmos exists indeed for those who have extended enough vision, in other words the faith to see it, its picture may be seen in the depths of the soul, that very throne of God, but to us who tread the pathways of the world, who are daily brought in contact with the social evils of this generation, the crime, the ignorance, the poverty, the suffering, how can such existence appear to us other than a chaos? Is it not a veritable Hell on Earth? But is there no "best Philosophy" such as Shelley speaks of:

> Whose taste
> Makes this cold common Hell—our life—a doom
> As glorious as a fiery martyrdom?

The reproach of being unpractical is often made against those who are deeply imbued with the philosophic spirit—they may not have the ready panacea for the cure of existing evils demanded by the philanthropist, whose partial remedy he is so apt to consider as such, and to apply with ill-considered action—but they who look

deep down see the real remedy, though their words may fall as vain sounds on the ears of the world.

The forces too that have long been set in motion are not lightly to be diverted from the goal towards which they have been hastening, and that goal is for us beginning to loom but too clearly in view. That child born of man's deep seated sense of justice (perverted though it may be) out of the dam, dire poverty, the shrieking red-clad socialist stalks among us, and following the inevitable law of retribution, over the people who have fallen deepest in the slough of materialism, and have been most dominated by the lusts of the flesh, is beginning to tremble the moan of the coming storm, while in their most populous cities the cries rise loudest. It may be too late now entirely to ward off the storm, but surely its fury might be mitigated were we even now to read the lesson aright.

To people whose upper classes are pandered to by nameless lusts, and whose lower classes breed like beasts of the field, without recognizing, as the beasts do, a non-breeding season, to this adulterous and lascivious generation were it not a worthy aim to show by word and deed that *it is* possible to dissociate love from lust, and that the loftiest emotion of which Humanity is capable has no necessary connection with the sexual bond? But what advance can be made till society recognizes that instead of offering a premium on marriage, they rather are worthy of admiration who can guard inviolate the sacred seed, under the influence of an aim the worldling knows not of—the aim of transferring the life-force from the material into the spiritual plane, with whatever results may accrue from this transformation of energy, of transcendental powers, or sweeter far the realization of the Platonic dream of union with our other half, the finding that within ourselves lay the twin soul which has been the object of our life-long search, in other words that in the microcosm, man, as in the macrocosm, God, are contained both the male and the female elements of existence.

What a contrast to this age of materiality to read of that old time when to prevent the depopulation of the country, it was necessary to enjoin each true-hearted Brahman to marry and beget one child before devoting himself to the main object of existence which should be to-day as it was then, the practice of Yoga.

But besides helping to counteract the dominant evil of our time another reason can be given for the practice of celibacy, though this lies more on the interior plane, and is therefore more a subject of

speculation. For it is a satisfaction to think that by refusing further to swell the already overteeming populations, the ranks of the unborn are lessened to a smaller degree, that a few more souls continue to enjoy the rosy dreams of Heaven.

But though the general acceptance of a less gross form of life would greatly tend towards the amelioration of human existence, to expect it from this generation would seem like putting the effect before the cause, for what is there to impel towards any curbing of the passions while Ignorance holds almost undivided sway? All evils under which Humanity groans may indeed be ascribed to that baleful influence, and it is useless to lop off one of the hydra heads of the monster, while she is capable of replacing it by a still more hideous growth. Andromeda truly pictures Humanity to-day, but where is the redeemer Perseus to be looked for save under the shining garb of the occult wisdom? The worldly knowledge with its glittering train of physical sciences and mechanical inventions can never set Humanity free, it but weaves round its votaries still more deluding webs of darkness. But we may hope that Reason will once more "shed her beams of dawn" over the dim world, and that true faith will once more shine in the hearts of men, for when the knowledge has filtered in that this life is but one of an endless chain of similar existences, will not the futility of gratifying every whim of the senses, which must so often before have been gratified give place to the desire for freedom from such dominance, and to the yearning for some more lasting bliss? and when it is realized that our present thoughts and acts are the factors that determine our future lives and that the pain (or joy) of the present is the retribution of the past, will not a goad be fixed in the hearts of many to drive them on the right way? and finally, when it is dimly perceived that the soul in past existences has experienced all heights and depths of earthly things—has realized all the sweets of wealth, of honor, of power, of love—that the bitter has been very bitter indeed and that the sweetest of the sweet has failed to give permanent satisfaction, will there not spring up in the soul a deep distaste for this loathsome life, a firm intent to pierce the veil of Maya that hides from us the celestial region?

This piercing of the veil, or to adopt a simile which will carry us a little further, this scaling of the mountain is conceived of in very different ways. To some it seems as the culmination of one gigantic effort, to others as the result of infinitely slow progress.

It is now pictured as "the killing of the deadly serpent of self for which Supreme moment is needed a strength such as no hero of the battle field needs." Elsewhere it is described as the steadfast toil of the will "till efforts end in ease and thought has passed from thinking," as the gradual centreing of all thought in the eternal thought till all earth-born desires and fears die out through sheer lack of the nourishment whereby they may be kept alive. The truth may lie in the union of these two apparently contradictory modes of thought, or it may be that as the different natures of men impel them to different lines of action, the pathways are really different though conducting to the same goal, or it may be suggested that the desperate effort referred to above, the supreme moment when the strength of the hero is needed, may be symbolised in the action of one of the mountain climbers, who has strayed from the true mountain side, into some rocky cul-de-sac, up some misleading pinnacle. A desperate leap will doubtless be required of him to reach the true breast of the mountain again. But he who has started on the ascent with a true guide will not mistake the rocky pinnacle for the snow-clad summit. His progress will be fast or slow as the strength and will within him shall decide. Therefore to the aspirant should it ever seem like the steady ascent of the mountain for which are demanded all his combined energies of courage, prudence and steadfastness. And as the summit is approached, all dread anticipation of what the future may bring as well as the fever of personal desire and earthly passion will be left behind like the mist of the valley. Hope and Fear alike will disappear in the purity of that serene air.

And the love which could no longer identify itself with any one object of desire, or find any resting place on earth will have been gradually purged from all taint of animal passion, and will daily become more Godlike in its diffusion, until personal likes and dislikes melt away before its intensity of worship of the one supreme Perfection. All appearances of difference will then be blotted out —friends and enemies, kinsmen and aliens, yea, good and evil men —all will appear alike—for God only will be seen in all, and the bliss of Yoga will be attained.

PILGRIM

ON LANGUAGE

AS men study language, the more they are led to recognize that conceptual thought and speech are of the very essence of being human. Writing a year ago in the *American Scholar* (Winter, 1966-67), Lewis Mumford observed that "the very existence of grammatically complex and highly articulated languages at the onset of civilization five thousand years ago, when tools were extremely primitive, suggests that the human race may have had even more fundamental needs than getting a living, since it might have continued to do the latter on the same terms as its hominid ancestors." While there is confusion, here, owing to the general modern ignorance of lost civilizations and the misconceptions wrought by Darwinian theory, the basic intuition of man as a being of consciousness, with language as its expression, seems quite clear. In this article, Mr. Mumford is intent upon pointing out that the mind-qualities of human beings may be far more important as an explanation of man's evolution than the "tool-making propensities" on which anthropologists place so much reliance. Mr. Mumford writes:

> There seems a likelihood that the earliest peoples, perhaps even before language was available, had a dim consciousness of their own being: a greater incentive to reflection and self-development than any pragmatic attempt to adjust to a narrower environment. Some of this grave religious response is still present in the legends of creation among many surviving tribal cultures, and notably among American Indians.

In such reflections, the student may recognize the tendency to accept as significant evidence concerning the nature of man the *human* qualities he manifests, as distinguished from physiological traits and endowments. As this tendency strengthens, old theories founded on misconceptions of biological evolution may simply die out from lack of attention. Increasingly, evidence is coming to light of the importance of the view expressed by Mr. Mumford, a natural consequence being that language is more and more accepted as

coeval with man himself. A recent book by an English scholar, George Steiner, entitled *Language and Silence* (Atheneum, 1967), provides both learned and poetic confirmation of this view. Early in this volume, Mr. Steiner says:

> That articulate speech should be the line dividing man from the myriad forms of animate being, that speech should define man's singular eminence above the silence of the plant and the grunt of the beast—stronger, more cunning, longer of life than he—is classic doctrine well before Aristotle. We find it in Hesiod's *Theogony*. Man is, to Aristotle, a being of the word. How the word came to him is, as Socrates admonishes in the *Cratylus*, a riddle, a question worth asking so as to goad the mind into play, so as to wake it to the wonder of its communicative genius, but it is not a question to which a certain answer lies in human reach.
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> Possessed of speech, possessed by it, the word having chosen the grossness and infirmity of man's condition for its own compelling life, the human person has broken free from the great silence of matter.

Modern scholars may be a long way from admitting that language represents the continuity of the present humanity with "a more advanced *mankind* so much higher as to be *divine* in the sight of that infant humanity" (*S.D.* I, 309), but if the principle of human identity as *mind* be admitted, a filling out of the picture may be only a matter of time. In what Mr. Steiner writes, there seems a sense of the Promethean mission, an appreciation of the burdens assumed by man, and a feeling for the wonder which may result from mastery over the raw materials of life.

But what does the occult doctrine say on this mysterious question? In *The Secret Doctrine* (II, 661), Madame Blavatsky denies that human speech developed from "various animal sounds." The problem is to account for the *roots* of language, as she shows a little later (page 662). Earlier in Volume II, there is this general account of the development of speech:

> The Third Race developed in the beginning a kind of language which was only a slight improvement on the various sounds in Nature, on the cry of gigantic insects and of the first animals, which, however, were hardly nascent in the day of the "Sweat-born" (the *early* Third Race).

Then, when the later Third Race began "to evolve into separate males and females," and to reproduce their kind, this, she says, "was an act which forced the creative gods, compelled by Karmic

law, to incarnate in *mindless* men; then only was speech developed." Monosyllabic speech, she explains, came at the end of the Third Root Race, with the full awakening of mind. Before that—

> they communicated through what would now be called "thought-transference," though, with the exception of the Race called the "Sons of Will and Yoga"—the first in whom the "Sons of Wisdom" had incarnated—thought was very little developed in nascent physical man, and never soared above a low terrestrial level. Their physical bodies belonging to earth, their Monads remained on a higher plane altogether. Language could not be well developed before the full acquisition and development of their reasoning faculties. This monosyllabic speech was the vowel parent, so to speak, of the monosyllabic languages mixed with hard consonants, still in use amongst the yellow races which are known to the anthropologist.

This passage (II, 199) is followed by a discussion of the evolution of language from agglutinative to inflectional forms, causing H.P.B. to remark, also, that "as languages have their cyclic evolution, their childhood, purity, growth, *fall into matter,* admixture with other languages, maturity, decay and finally death, so the primitive speech of the most civilized Atlantean races . . . decayed and almost died out." With this complex history in mind, it is natural enough that scholars who know nothing of these ancient modifications of the original speech of mankind should over-simplify and make mistakes. Much better, because capable of some accuracy, are the intuitive insights about language of those who take their evidence from the existential feelings of their own hearts. One other hint as to the hidden potentialities of language and speech may be recorded here. In the first volume of *The Secret Doctrine* (p. 307), H.P.B. says:

> The religious and esoteric history of every nation was embedded in symbols; it was never expressed in so many words. All the thoughts and emotions, all the learning and knowledge, revealed and acquired, of the early races, found their pictorial expression in allegory and parable. Why? Because *the spoken word has a potency unknown to, unsuspected and disbelieved in,* by the modern "sages."

THE CHRISTIAN SCHEME

PAGAN ROOTS: *The Neo-Platonists*

IN the foregoing lies the foundation of the fierce hatred of the Christians toward the "Pagans" and the theurgists. Too much had been *borrowed;* the ancient religions and the Neo-platonists had been laid by them under contribution sufficiently to perplex the world for several thousand years. Had not the ancient creeds been speedily obliterated, it would have been found impossible to preach the Christian religion as a New Dispensation, or the direct Revelation from God the Father, through God the Son, and under the influence of God the Holy Ghost. As a political exigence the Fathers had—to gratify the wishes of their rich converts—instituted even the festivals of Pan. They went so far as to accept the ceremonies hitherto celebrated by the Pagan world in honor of the *God of the gardens,* in all their primitive *sincerity*. It was time to sever the connection. Either the Pagan worship and the Neo-platonic theurgy, with all ceremonial of magic, must be crushed out forever, or the Christians become Neo-platonists.

The fierce polemics and single-handed battles between Irenæus and the Gnostics are too well known to need repetition. They were carried on for over two centuries after the unscrupulous Bishop of Lyons had uttered his last religious paradox. Celsus, the Neo-platonist, and a disciple of the school of Ammonius Saccas, had thrown the Christians into perturbation, and even had arrested for a time the progress of proselytism by successfully proving that the original and purer forms of the most important dogmas of Christianity were to be found only in the teachings of Plato. Celsus accused them of accepting the worst superstitions of Paganism, and of interpolating passages from the books of the Sybils, without rightly understanding their meaning. The accusations were so plausible, and the facts so patent, that for a long time no Christian writer had ventured to answer the challenge. Origen, at the fervent request of his friend, Ambrosius, was the first to take the defense in hand, for,

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NOTE.—"The Christian Scheme," begun in November, 1967, is collated from the works of H. P. Blavatsky. It recounts the historical background and early development of Christianity.

having belonged to the same Platonic school of Ammonius, he was considered the most competent to refute the well-founded charges. But his eloquence failed, and the only remedy that could be found was to destroy the writings of Celsus themselves.[1] This could be achieved only in the fifth century, when copies had been taken from this work, and many were those who had read and studied them. If no copy of it has descended to our present generation of scientists, it is not because there is none extant at present, but for the simple reason that the monks of a certain Oriental church on Mount Athos will neither show nor confess they have one in their possession.[2] Perhaps they do not even know themselves the value of the contents of their manuscripts, on account of their great ignorance.

The dispersion of the Eclectic school had become the fondest hope of the Christians. It had been looked for and contemplated with intense anxiety. It was finally achieved. The members were scattered by the hand of the monsters Theophilus, Bishop of Alexandria, and his nephew Cyril—the murderer of the young, the

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[1] The Celsus above mentioned, who lived between the second and third centuries, is not Celsus the Epicurean. The latter wrote several works against Magic, and lived earlier, during the reign of Hadrian.

[2] We have the facts from a trustworthy witness, having no interest to invent such a story. Having injured his leg in a fall from the steamer into the boat in which he was to land at the Mount, he was taken care of by these monks, and during his convalescence, through gifts of money and presents, became their greatest friend, and finally won their entire confidence. Having asked for the loan of some books, he was taken by the Superior to a large cellar in which they keep their sacred vessels and other property. Opening a great trunk, full of old musty manuscripts and rolls, he was invited by the Superior to "*amuse* himself." The gentleman was a scholar, and well versed in Greek and Latin text. "I was amazed," he says, in a private letter, "and had my breath taken away, on finding among these old parchments, so unceremoniously treated, some of the most valuable relics of the first centuries, hitherto believed to have been lost." Among others he found a half-destroyed manuscript, which he is perfectly sure must by a copy of the "True Doctrine" of Celsus, out of which Origen quoted whole pages. The traveller took as many notes as he could on that day, but when he came to offer to the Superior to purchase some of these writings he found, to his great surprise, that no amount of money would tempt the monks. They did not know what the manuscripts contained, nor "did they care," they said. But the "heap of writing," they added, was transmitted to them from one generation to another, and there was a tradition among them that these papers would one day become the means of crushing the "Great Beast of the Apocalypse," their hereditary enemy, the Church of Rome. They were constantly quarrelling and fighting with the Catholic monks, and among the whole "heap" they *knew* that there was a "holy" relic which protected them. They did not know *which*, and so in their doubt abstained. It appears that the Superior, a shrewd Greek, understood his *bevue* and repented of his kindness, for first of all he made the traveller give him his most sacred word of honor, strengthened by an oath he made him take on the image of the Holy Patroness of the Island, never to betray their secret, and never mention, at least, the name of their convent. And finally, when the anxious student who had passed a fortnight in reading all sorts of antiquated trash before he happened to stumble over some precious manuscript, expressed the desire to have the key, to "amuse himself" with the writings once more, he was very *naïvely* informed that the "key had been lost," and that they did not know where to look for it. And thus he was left to the few notes he had taken.

learned, and the innocent Hypatia![3]

It was no doubt, also, according to strict "necessity" that the Neo-platonists were so summarily dealt with by the Christian mob. In those days, the doctrines of the Hindu naturalists and antediluvian Pyrrhonists were forgotten, if they ever had been known at all, to any but a few philosophers; and Mr. Darwin, with his modern *discoveries,* had not even been mentioned in the prophecies. In this case the law of the survival of the fittest was reversed; the *Neo-platonists were doomed to destruction from the day when they openly sided with Aristotle.*

At the beginning of the fourth century crowds began gathering at the door of the academy where the learned and unfortunate Hypatia expounded the doctrines of the divine Plato and Plotinus, and thereby impeded the progress of Christian proselytism. She too successfully dispelled the mist hanging over the religious "mysteries" invented by the Fathers, not to be considered dangerous. This alone would have been sufficient to imperil both herself and her followers. It was precisely the teachings of this Pagan philosopher which had been so freely borrowed by the Christians to give a finishing touch to their otherwise incomprehensible scheme, that had seduced so many into joining the new religion; and now the Platonic light began shining so inconveniently bright upon the pious patchwork, as to allow every one to see whence the "revealed" doctrines were derived. But there was a still greater peril. Hypatia had studied under Plutarch, the head of the Athenian school, and had learned all the secrets of theurgy. While she lived to instruct the multitude, no *divine* miracles could be produced before one who could divulge the natural causes by which they took place. Her doom was sealed by Cyril, whose eloquence she eclipsed, and whose authority, built on degrading supersitions, had to yield before hers, which was erected on the rock of immutable natural law. It is more than curious that Cave, the author of the *Lives of the Fathers,* should find it incredible that Cyril sanctioned her murder on account of his "general character." A saint who will sell the gold and silver vessels of his church, and then, after spending the money, lie at his trial, as he did, may well be suspected of anything. Besides, in this case, the Church had to fight for her life, to say nothing of her future supremacy. Alone, the hated and erudite Pagan scholars, and the no less learned Gnostics, held in

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[3] See the historical romance of Canon Kingsley, *Hypatia*, for a highly picturesque account of the tragical fate of this young martyr.

their doctrines the hitherto concealed wires of all these theological marionettes. Once the curtain should be lifted, the connection between the old Pagan and the new Christian religions would be exposed; and then, what would have become of the Mysteries into which it is sin and blasphemy to pry? With such a coincidence of the astronomical allegories of various Pagan myths with the dates adopted by Christianity for the nativity, crucifixion, and resurrection, and such an identity of rites and ceremonies, what would have been the fate of the new religion, had not the Church, under the pretext of serving Christ, got rid of the too-well-informed philosophers? To guess what, if the *coup d'état* had then failed, might have been the prevailing religion in our own century would indeed, be a hard task. But, in all probability, the state of things which made of the middle ages a period of intellectual darkness, which degraded the nations of the Occident, and lowered the European of those days almost to the level of a Papuan savage—could not have occurred.

With the death of the martyred daughter of Theon, the mathematician, there remained no possibility for the Neo-platonists to continue their school at Alexandria. During the life-time of the youthful Hypatia, her friendship and influence with Orestes, the governor of the city, had assured the philosophers security and protection against their murderous enemies. With her death they had lost their strongest friend. How much she was revered by all who knew her for her education, noble virtues, and character, we can infer from the letters addressed to her by Synesius, Bishop of Ptolemais, fragments of which have reached us. "My heart yearns for the presence of your divine spirit," he wrote in 413 A. D., "which more than anything else could alleviate the bitterness of my fortunes." At another time he says: "Oh, my mother, my sister, my teacher, my benefactor! My soul is very sad. The recollection of my children I have lost is killing me. . . . When I have news of you and learn, as I hope, that you are more fortunate than myself, I am at least only half-unhappy."

What would have been the feelings of this most noble and worthy of Christian bishops, who had surrendered family and children and happiness for the faith into which he had been attracted, had a prophetic vision disclosed to him that the only friend that had been left to him, his "mother, sister, benefactor," would soon become an unrecognizable mass of flesh and blood, pounded to jelly under the blows of the club of Peter the Reader—that her youthful, innocent

body would be cut to pieces, "the flesh scraped from the bones," by oyster-shells and the rest of her cast into the fire, by order of the same Bishop Cyril he know so well—Cyril, the CANONIZED Saint!![4]

There has never been a religion in the annals of the world with such a bloody record as Christianity. All the rest, including the traditional fierce fights of the "chosen people" with their next of kin, the idolatrous tribes of Israel, pale before the murderous fanaticism of the alleged followers of Christ! Even the rapid spread of Mahometanism before the conquering sword of the Islam prophet, is a direct consequence of the bloody riots and fights among Christians. It was the intestine war between the Nestorians and Cyrilians that engendered Islamism; and it is in the convent of Bozrah that the prolific seed was first sown by Bahira, the Nestorian monk. Freely watered by rivers of blood, the tree of Mecca has grown till we find it in the present century overshadowing nearly two hundred millions of people. The recent Bulgarian atrocities are but the natural outgrowth of the triumph of Cyril and the Mariolaters.

The cruel, crafty politician, the plotting monk, glorified by ecclesiastical history with the aureole of a martyred saint. The despoiled philosophers, the Neo-platonists, and the Gnostics, daily anathematized by the Church all over the world for long and dreary centuries. The curse of the unconcerned Deity hourly invoked on the magian rites and theurgic practice, and the Christian clergy themselves using *sorcery* for ages. Hypatia, the glorious maiden-philosopher, torn to pieces by the Christian mob. And such as Catherine de Medici, Lucrezia Borgia, Joanna of Naples, and the Isabellas of Spain, presented to the world as the faithful daughters of the Church—some even decorated by the Pope with the order of the "Immaculate Rose," the highest emblem of womanly purity and virtue, a symbol sacred to the Virgin-mother of God! Such are the examples of human justice! How far less blasphemous appears a total rejection of Mary as an immaculate goddess, than an idolatrous worship of her, accompanied by such practices.

The famous Catholic theologian, Tillemont, assures us in his work that "all the illustrious Pagans are condemned to the eternal tor-

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[4] We beg the reader to bear in mind that it is the same Cyril who was accused and proved guilty of having sold the gold and silver ornaments of his church, and spent the money. He pleaded guilty, but tried to excuse himself on the ground that he had used the money for the poor, but could not give evidence of it. His duplicity with Arius and his party is well known. Thus one of the first Christian saints, and the founder of the Trinity, appears on the pages of history as a murderer and a thief!

ments of hell, *because* they lived before the time of Jesus, and therefore, could not be benefited by the redemption!!" He also assures us that the Virgin Mary personally testified to this truth over her own signature in a letter to a saint.

When dying on the cross, the martyred Man of Sorrows forgave his enemies. His last words were a prayer in their behalf. He taught his disciples to curse not, but to bless, even their foes. But the heirs of St. Peter, the self-constituted representatives on earth of that same meek Jesus, unhesitatingly curse whoever resists their despotic will. Besides, was not the "Son" long since crowded by them into the background? They make their obeisance only to the Dowager Mother, for—according to their teaching—again through "the direct Spirit of God," she alone acts as a mediatrix. The Œcumenical Council of 1870 embodied the teaching into a dogma, to disbelieve which is to be doomed forever to the "bottomless pit." The work of Don Pasquale di Franciscis is positive on that point; for he tells us that, as the Queen of Heaven owes to the present Pope "the finest gem in her coronet," since he has conferred on her the unexpected honor of becoming suddenly immaculate, there is nothing she cannot obtain from her Son for "her Church."

That the Neoplatonists were not always despised or accused of demonolatry is evidenced in the adoption by the Roman Church of their very rites and theurgy. The identical evocations and incantations of the Pagan and Jewish Kabalist, are now repeated by the Christian exorcist, and the theurgy of Iamblichus was adopted word for word. "Distinct as were the Platonists and Pauline Christians of the earlier centuries," writes Professor A. Wilder, "many of the more distinguished teachers of the new faith were deeply tinctured with the philosophical leaven. Synesius, the Bishop of Cyrene, was the disciple of Hypatia. *St. Anthony reiterated the theurgy of Iamblichus.* The *Logos,* or word of the Gospel according to John, was a Gnostic personification. Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and others of the fathers drank deeply from the fountains of philosophy. The ascetic idea which carried away the Church was like that which was practiced by Plotinus . . . all through the middle ages there rose up men who accepted the interior doctrines which were promulgated by the renowned teacher of the Academy."

letters • questions • comment

No matter what variations they may exhibit, religions are always based on the concept of a God or gods. Theosophy purports to be a religion, in the sense that it fulfills the religious aspirations of man, yet the theosophical idea of God is vague and is not often discussed, as it is in church services. Can an "Abstract Principle," such as that presented in Theosophy, take the place of a more realistic God?

Let us look first at some of the implications of the question, which seems founded on ideas which are not historically accurate. It is not true, for example, that there are no religions without the God-idea. Buddhism is such a religion. Further, even in Christianity there are hints of the fact that the true God is intellectually unknowable, and all the high religions bear evidence of this fundamentally pantheistic conception. There is little value in studying "church services," except as examples of historical compromise and distortion of what were originally philosophical ideas. The comparative religion of the day, dealing with the similarities and differences among these compromises, can hardly get at the root of the matter. The reader of *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine* soon finds this out.

To object to what Theosophy says on the questions of the highest, or Deity, on the ground that it is vague, could easily be an argument based on a liking for these comforting compromises—which have such uncomfortable results. "Vague" is a word that is properly applied only to matters which are capable of clearer expression. If an idea is by nature inexpressible in finite terms, to say so, or to give it what expression is possible in terms of philosophical abstractions—as may be found in *The Secret Doctrine*—is not to be "vague," but simply to avoid the fallacy of misplaced concreteness. To prefer "a more realistic god" to the divine abstractions of philosophy would be, to borrow from Edwin Arnold, insisting on measuring with words the immeasurable.

Ancient, philosophical religion always avoided direct expression on the idea of the Unknowable. What was possible to say about the work of the manifested deity was put into the form of polytheistic

doctrine showing that a multitude of creative gods exist. But these gods are finite. To none of them was there assigned such contradictory attributes as Omniscience and Omnipotence and Omnipresence—except of course, in their unmanifest aspect, and this would be true of all beings, since all that is has in it the potentiality of Godhood.

In *The Key to Theosophy,* a questioner asks H. P. Blavatsky whether Theosophy is a religion. She answers: "It is not. Theosophy is Divine Knowledge or Science." She then explains the derivation of the name—Divine Wisdom, or Wisdom of the Gods, is the correct interpretation of *Theo Sophia.*

Thus, as broad as is the idea of religion, Theosophical teaching exhibits an even wider scope. In a sense, all knowledge, all wisdom, in fact everything perceivable by man in his many aspects, is included in Theosophy. Hence, to say that Theosophy is a religion, or even religion itself (tying all back to the source), may not be inclusive enough. That it is a subject requiring study, contemplation, and realization, may certainly be granted; that it leads to self-awareness and awareness of Self gives a clue to its nature.

But what, indeed, can be said of the Infinite other than that it IS, that it precedes and sustains and endures beyond any being? Any limitation upon the nature of the Infinite is a reduction to finite terms. If a man's mental processes are so limited that he wants a god of an objective sort, let him construct an idol of stone, wood, or straw, and give it a name. It will be his creation, his creature.

Yet a "fatherly" God is just as much a creation of the imagination, and its characteristics are just as much subject to the will of its creator, as an idol is. During infancy and youth, important relationships are established between parent and child. The father is, ideally, the provider, protector, and advisor of the child. He is the authority because his advantage in years establishes him as the more experienced. But when the child becomes in his turn an adult, he also becomes his own provider, his own protector, his own chooser. All these developments are implicit in the process of growing up. Now, by extension, if deity or God is viewed as a Father, as seems to be the tendency of many "religious" people, the same pattern holds true. God is expected to protect and provide, and to exert his will in determining what will befall his "child," and the child is dependent upon God. If the child makes mistakes, he may be forgiven or he may not. If he leads a blameless life, he may reap the reward or he may

be tried, "tested," by hardships and disasters. Thus simplified, the idea of a personal God leaves much to be desired and much to be answered for.

The concept of Deity offered by Theosophy is indeed "abstract"; but this does not mean that it is removed from the sphere of man's realization. Moreover, are the "human" qualities specific? One thinks of Love, Goodness, Wisdom, Integrity, Humor, Sympathy (as well as their antitheses). Each of these qualities is in its essence abstract, for no particular instance or expression could be said to contain all of a given quality, to serve as a complete definition. For example, there is a timelessness inherent in the concept of Love, whereas a specific demonstration of love is of fixed duration. It is the same with all the qualities. Applying this idea to Deity, it seems clear that to preserve the universality of Deity it is essential that a *principle* be posited, of no fixed time, place, or condition—because belonging to all.

Finally, let us consider the comment that the idea of God is not often discussed in theosophical meetings or literature. On the contrary, all that is said or written of potentiality relates to Deity as the First Principle. (We might as well say that a lecture series whose subjects included tides, waves, currents, and marine life did not deal with the ocean.) We have only to turn to the *Index to The Secret Doctrine* to discover how fully H.P.B. has treated the subject of Deity. In the Introductory to *The Secret Doctrine* (p. xx), she sketches the broad esoteric conception as follows:

> Esoteric philosophy reconciles all religions, strips every one of its outward, human garments, and shows the root of each to be identical with that of every other great religion. It proves the necessity of an absolute Divine Principle in nature. It denies Deity no more than it does the Sun. Esoteric philosophy has never rejected God in Nature, nor Deity as the absolute and abstract *Ens*. It only refuses to accept any of the gods of the so-called monotheistic religions, gods created by man in his own image and likeness, a blasphemous and sorry caricature of the Ever Unknowable.

From this, anyone can see that to the theosophical student, the idea of "God" is so expanded that it is truly omnipresent, eternal and boundless; that it is not absent from any discussion; and that the nearer a treatment of Deity is to the abstract and impersonal, the nearer it is to Reality.

on the lookout

The Centenary Cycle

When, a little more than a hundred years ago, a wave of psychism gathered strength and began to fill the vacuum in the emotional lives of people of every class, it found its chief encouragement in dissatisfaction with sterile orthodox religion and in rejection of scientific materialism—both feelings which strengthened the new sense of the marvelous which Spiritualism was able to excite in its followers. The wonders of the séance, while filled with anomalies and moral contradictions, seemed to promise a new dispensation of faith. For all its faults and degradations, Spiritualism *did* illustrate laws of which science knew nothing, and brought a "realistic" conception of survival after death which put to shame the timid declarations of orthodoxy. What Spiritualism did not do—because there was no readiness for such iconoclasm—was to challenge very nearly *all* the placid assumptions and conceits of shallow, nineteenth-century optimism. This remained the task of an H.P.B., who added philosophic dimensions and clarifying criticism to the crude revelation of Spiritualism, and who introduced doctrines of cosmology, anthropology, and psychology which exposed the inadequate foundations of Western theories on these subjects and welded a new-old conception of both science and religion into inseparable unity with the timeless ethics of the Wisdom Religion.

Times Have Changed

The psychism of the present reveals far deeper currents than those of the nineteenth century. While there seems to be a small revival of Spiritualism—the television program showing Bishop Pike seeking communication with his deceased son is an example—the threat to orthodoxy in the present is far richer in diverse contentions and more inclusive in its challenges. The tide rises, today, in a world paralyzed by fear of its own destructive powers and sorely sickened by the effects of its indulgences. The present world is guilt-laden and afraid. Its institutions are brittle with mechanical complexity, its misplaced confidences shaken by widespread revolt.

The paradox of poverty and want in the midst of plenty, the practical failure of both reform and revolution, with confession of failure finding expression in both subjective and objective terms—these skeins of karmic retribution have become channels of unrest of a sort that has not been known for centuries, opening doors to the wildest speculations. In addition, there are emotional phenomena manifest in the new faiths which can only be described as embodying the "madness of crowds." And yet, the heritage of the twentieth-century cycle also includes reflections of the deepening perspectives introduced a little less than a hundred years ago by the Theosophical Movement.

Somewhere H.P.B. called Spiritualism a crude, primitive embodiment of "Theosophy," and she undertook to separate out and identify the themes of genuine higher longing that could be found in the psychism of her time, and then to unite them with the ethics and metaphysics of the Secret Doctrine. Her coming marked a time of preliminary choice for Western civilization.

Shadow and Light.

It is possible to see in the present preparations for similar choices that are to come. As in Spiritualism, one may discern threads of aspiration in even the light-hearted expressions of present-day psychism. When the sick long to be well, when those in darkness peer about for light, and when men begin to recognize some of the causes of their ills, however vaguely, there may be signs of hope in even the most unsettling tendencies. Yet there is also risk-taking and there are bound to be casualties. Spiritualism exacted a terrible toll, of which H.P.B. speaks in *The Key to Theosophy* and elsewhere. Nonetheless, it was from the broad impetus of the cycle of psychism that she obtained the initial momentum for her public work. Not to anticipate the similar tasks of the twentieth century—which would be a species of folly at this unripened time of the cycle—but to point to the broad sweep of the present cycle of psychism, we may take note of some of the things now happening.

"Children's Crusade"?

Most evident, of course, is the revolt and dissent of youth, in such variety of expressions that these can scarcely be catalogued. This generational break with the past is a decisively important factor which sets the present cycle apart from that of the nineteenth century, indicating, it may be, much more far-reaching historical

change. And while spokesmen for religious orthodoxy resisted with arrogant disdain the questioning of the Spiritualists a century ago, today the "progressive" spirit among religious authorities brings practically a reverse effect. On a visit to San Francisco recently, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Michael Ramsey, was quoted as identifying the "hippies" as a "new, imaginative cult"—"an instance of the dissatisfaction of young people toward the authoritarian way of life." He also spoke of the "great interest in mysticism and contemplation" among the young, and saw nothing surprising in the fact that these young people in quest of inner experience were "finding it outside Christianity." Christian concentration on "activism," he said, and the church's departure from the contemplative and mystical traditions, were responsible. One may accept this comment while recognizing that deeper forces are also at work.

"A Whole New Slant"

The penetration of orthodoxy by the new spirit among the young is partly ludicrous and partly encouraging. Allen Spraggett, religion editor of the Toronto *Star* (Sept. 23, 1967), reports on church use of rock-and-roll music:

> In Vancouver, an Anglican priest, Rev. James McGibbon, got into hot water with his bishop over a psychedelic service he conducted—complete with a rock group, go-go dancers, and strobe lights.
>
> Even Presbyterians, considered by many to be Canada's rock-ribbed religious conservatives, have their Teen Chapel group that holds Gospel rock services for young people in Metro churches.
>
> But as I've said, the traffic between the world of religion and the world of pop moves both ways. If rock has given religion a new beat, religion, less conspicuously but no less effectively, has given pop music a whole new slant. Whereas ten years ago the Hit Parade songs were all about—as I remember one disgusted nine-year-old putting it—"love, love, love," today they're about war and peace, social justice, estrangement, love thy neighbor, the instant mysticism of drugs, and the emptiness of life without love.

The "New Pantheism"

> Think of songs like Eve of Destruction, Blowin' in the Wind, that fairly drip social concern and existential involvement.
>
> Or think of the secular hymns of Joan Baez that reflect the same themes: Man's inhumanity to man, non-violence, the search for what it's all about. This is religion—vague, non-

theological, but religion nonetheless. The songs are hymns—without God, it's true, but hymns. . . .

Much of pop rock music seems to reflect what might be called the New Pantheism—the credo that there is no God and He's everywhere. . . .

The drugs and the psychedelic craze are probably the most frightening aspect of the entire ferment among today's youth. There could hardly be a greater deception than the idea that knowledge can be obtained from narcotics, or that the pseudo-unities of intoxication afford some kind of "spiritual" awareness. The cultist fascination by intensified sense and emotional experience, often gained by use of drugs, is surely among the most destructive aspects of the psychic cycle. But what may be overlooked is the fact that many young people, having tried these spurious delights, withdraw from them as not bringing what was promised. The popular press says little of this encouraging trend, since indulgence makes an exciting story, while self-restraint does not. And it is seldom pointed out in critical discussion of youth that adult intoxication by alcohol has for centuries, and never more than now, been a "respectable" form of indulgence and self-destructive escape. Thus the alarm over drugs, while wholly justified, betrays the peculiar partisanship allowed by convention and is fortified by commercial self-interest.

"Searching for a Long Time"

Another phase of rapidly changing fashions among the young is reported by a recent dispatch from London, which describes the sudden interest in "mysticism of the Orient." By courtesy of the hippies, the flower children, and the Beatles, this report relates, London has been taken "by—not storm—peace, tranquility, meditation and rather melodious tinkling of several thousand authentic Indian cowbells." The report continues:

The first signs of the take-over were seen in the United States. Oriental—particularly Indian and Hindu—rites and rituals crept in with the flowers as part of a certain way of life among young people. Religious hymns like Hari Krishna (Hail Krishna) of Hinduism were chanted at their gatherings from New York to San Francisco.

In England, the interest of the Beatles, particularly, in Indian music, had brought the young people in contact with meditation. This coincided with the visit to Britain of an Indian seer, Maharashi Mahesh Yogi, who preached a mystical transcendental meditation. The Beatles were complete converts.

> "We have been searching for a long time for something like this," said George Harrison. "Some of the things we have done in the past have been part of this search."
>
> They did not regret having tried drugs. "But," said John Lennon, "if we had met Maharashi before we had taken LSD we would not have needed to take it." . . .

Indian Themes

> The immediate involvement of British youngsters in everything Indian has been staggering. Every organization concerned with India or Asia—from high commission to private groups—have received an unprecedented number of assorted inquiries.
>
> Where can we learn more about Indian music? Where can we learn the practice of yoga? Can we have lessons in meditation? Can you teach us to play the sitar? The questions cover a wide range of interests, from dress to dance and drama.

By this talk of "meditation," one is immediately reminded of the "dangers of the lower iddhi," and made to notice, as well, the almost complete absence of ideas of asceticism and of the disciplined use of the mind in *study*—both indispensable prerequisites of spiritual knowledge. Yet these ideas were also absent in the early days of Spiritualism. Hazards there were in the crude efforts to evoke "spirits of the dead" in a Spiritualistic séance—and hazards there are, again, although of a subtler kind, in the passivity which comes from careless attempts at "meditation," without the guide of those metaphysical and ethical distinctions which Patanjali, for example, takes for granted. The brief notes of Mr. Judge, in his rendition of the Yoga Aphorisms, make this quite clear.

Germination and Growth

Never were the discussions of the psychological states in the articles by H.P.B. and Mr. Judge more pertinent, and their warnings, at this moment of history, are of greater importance than the promise of self-discovery. But psychism, unfortunately, is precisely the phenomenon which tends to shut out warnings. The general situation is exactly as Madame Blavatsky put it in her *Five Messages* to the American Theosophists. The work of the Movement, she said, was "to guide the spiritual awakening that has now begun, and not to pander to psychic cravings which are but another form of materialism." And to this she added: "For by 'materialism' is meant not only an anti-philosophical negation of pure spirit, and, even more, materialism in conduct and action—brutality, hypocrisy, and, above all, selfishness,—but also the fruits of a disbelief in all but

material things." Speaking of the future, she said that in America, in particular, "the latent psychic and occult powers in man are beginning to germinate and grow." Of tendencies becoming manifest at that time, she said: "All these movements represent nothing but different phases of the exercise of these growing powers,—as yet not understood and therefore but too ignorantly misused." Finally, she declared that "there is nothing 'spiritual' or 'divine' in any of these manifestations," and that such "capacities, running riot, controlling instead of controlled, using instead of being used, lead the Student into the most dangerous delusions and the certainty of moral destruction." On the other hand, "held perfectly under control, checked and directed by the Manasic principle," psychic capacities "are valuable aids in development."

Truths "Not Yet Grasped"

In the present, psychic tendencies, moral weakness and moral longing, and the determination to bring about change seem inextricably mixed. The karma of the age, and its destined evolutionary development, which bring both opportunity and danger, are slowly disclosing both promise and threat. Only time can untangle all these threads of morally mixed human nature—time, and the precipitating presence of truths which speak to deeper and higher levels of man's nature than are even hinted at by the misleading psychic doctrines now so loosely repeated and embraced.

A Los Angeles psychologist, William H. Blanchard, has offered a particularly pertinent comment (Los Angeles *Times,* Oct. 1, 1967):

> In his admiration for Zen and philosophies of the East, the hippie has overlooked an important element. The ancient gurus used to tell their disciples that Nirvana, the peace that passeth understanding, was not for everyone and that it could not be approached without careful preparation and an awareness of the risks involved. This is one bit of Eastern wisdom that the Western hippie has not yet grasped.

"Fundamentalist" Trend?

An article in the Los Angeles *Herald-Examiner's* weekly supplement, *California Living* (Nov. 5, 1967), deals with the opinions of high school students about religion. The reporter, Richard Baxter, talked to four seventeen-year-olds in a "leadership" group at the high school in Banning, California, obtaining expressions which led him to say that the students, all of whom belonged to one or another Christian denomination, were calling for "a return to the funda-

mentalist ideals of early America." However, judging from the statements of these young people, it seems more pertinent to describe their attitude as increasingly free of institutional controls. One student spoke of the trend "towards a fusion of all churches and religions." "I don't like it particularly," he said. "The Antichrist will eventually be controlling one church."

"Faith in Yourself"

A Banning girl said:

> For one, I don't think the religions are necessarily coming together. I'm a Catholic and most of those in my church resist the ecumenical movement. They're still rather separatist.
>
> Also, I can't say I believe that the Bible should be so rigidly interpreted. It was meant to be a crutch. Religion is merely a pattern people must follow.
>
> The God I follow is not a person. It will be a person within me. God is a very individual thing. I think this is the trend that will be borne out in the next few decades.

A nineteen-year-old junior at UCLA told the same reporter that he thought the terminology of religion will change during the next twenty years. "What we now call religion," he said, "will then be called Spiritualism." He added: "It will relate more to the individual than to the masses." His last comment was:

> I think "love thy neighbor" will not die as a concept, but "faith in yourself" will replace "faith in God."

"The Church—They Ignore It"

An article in the L.A. *Times* (Nov. 6, 1967) by John Dart, carries similar themes. Mr. Dart interviewed Craig Needham, president of the student body at Santa Clara, a Roman Catholic college. This twenty-one-year-old student is also a spokesman for a campus group, "Just Us," which is sponsoring somewhat unorthodox activities. One of these is identified by the reporter as a "folk or hippie-style Mass . . . celebrated near the end of the six-hour meeting" at Loyola University. Following are some of the opinions expressed by the Catholic student leader:

> "The church doesn't mean a damn thing to students any more. Liturgy, commandments—they don't reject it; they ignore it."
>
> Needham maintains "young kids are turned off by the cloth these days." He says there are exceptions, and that he himself thinks priests and nuns are wonderful people. But he said so many young people have immediate negative reactions to the

clergy and their garb, and to words like "Christian."

Attending church on Sunday is a "compartmentalized" religious practice and unrelated to their daily problems, Needham believes.

These are some of the significant signs of the times. While many people are leaving the church, being no longer able to accept the traditional teachings, others are transforming it from within, fostering attitudes which rigid believers must find extremely difficult to cope with. The trend, quite plainly, is toward undogmatic, somewhat personal religion. What these tendencies may mean, in the long run, for the identity of denominational religion, remains to be seen.

Paracelsus and Astrophysics

The reviewer of William A. Fowler's *Nuclear Astrophysics* (*Science,* Oct. 13, 1967) quotes a passage that might have come from Paracelsus' writings:

> . . . all the elements heavier than helium, and perhaps the helium too, have been synthesized in stars . . . your bodies consist for the most part of these heavier elements. Thus . . . you and your neighbor and I, each one of us and all of us, are truly and literally a little bit of star dust.

Paracelsus wrote: "Man is a sun and a moon, and a heaven filled with stars." An important question, however, is asked by H.P.B. in *Isis Unveiled* (I, 168) in a discussion of Paracelsus' theory:

> The identical composition of the earth and all other planetary bodies and man's terrestrial body was a fundamental idea in his philosophy. "The body comes from the elements, the [astral] spirit from the stars. . . . Man eats and drinks of the elements, for the sustenance of his blood and flesh; from the stars are the intellect and thoughts sustained in his spirit." . . .

She continues:

> How did Paracelsus come to learn anything of the composition of the stars, when, till a very recent period—till the discovery of the spectroscope in fact—the constituents of the heavenly bodies were utterly unknown to our learned academies? Could Paracelsus have been so sure of the nature of the starry host, unless he had means of which science knows nothing?
>
> We must bear in mind, moreover, that *Paracelsus was the discoverer of hydrogen, and knew well all its properties and composition* long before any of the orthodox academicians ever thought of it; that he had studied astrology and astronomy, as all the fire-philosophers did; and that, if he did assert that man is in a direct affinity with the stars, he knew well what he asserted.

A Vital Error

The difficulty of ascertaining the "moment of death" by physical means is illustrated by a report in the Los Angeles *Times* (Nov. 3, 1967). A soldier, wounded in Vietnam, was pronounced "dead" after intensive efforts for forty-five minutes had failed to revive him, and the cardiogram showed no evidence of heart activity. But when, "hours later," preparations for embalming revealed "a slight pulsation" in the femoral artery, the soldier was rushed back to the hospital, where efforts to resuscitate him were renewed with success. The young man is now said to be making "amazing progress."

Features in this case suggest that the soldier was in a state of suspended animation—which has the following description by H.P.B. (*Isis* I, 483):

> . . . the annals of medicine teem with examples of "suspended animation" as the result of asphyxia by drowning, the inhalation of gases and other causes; life being restored in the case of drowning persons even after they had been apparently dead for twelve hours.
>
> In cases of somnambulic trance, none of the ordinary signs of death are lacking; breathing and the pulse are extinct; animal-heat has disappeared; the muscles are rigid, the eye glazed, and the body is colorless. . . . What they [medical men] call "suspended animation," is that state from which the patient spontaneously recovers, through an effort of his own spirit, which may be provoked by any one of many causes. In these cases, the astral body has not parted from the physical body; its external functions are simply suspended; the subject is in a state of torpor, and the restoration is nothing but a recovery from it.

Drama of Ideas

A drama review in *Peace News* (Oct. 27, 1967) offers a kind of criticism that is both rare and much needed in the present. The writer, Theodore Roszak, examines an admittedly surrealist offering in London, titled *Tom Paine,* and finds it lacking in just those ingredients it ought to possess. Mr. Roszak says:

> Why do I feel the show falls short of its pretensions? In selecting the figure of Thomas Paine, Paul Foster has chosen to write a drama of ideas. Inevitably. Whether he wanted to or not. . . . It is in his ideas that Paine lives and would want to live.

But the greatness of Paine's ideas cannot be honored by a charade of praise, nor even by long chunks of quotation. Their *drama* needs direct embodiment in the play. Mr. Roszak continues:

In *Marat/Sade,* after which Tom Paine is patterned, Peter Weiss demonstrated that theatrical pizzazz is not incompatible with a decent clash of ideas. By pitting Marat the rationalist against de Sade the psychopath and staging their debate in a madhouse, Weiss managed to drive home an incisive truth: namely, that all mass movements, even when they carry the banners of liberty, equality, and fraternity, border on being criminally insane.

No "Propaganda" Needed

. . . We get no debate in Tom Paine. . . . Where the possibility of debate all but thrusts out a leg to trip the playwright (as in the historic duel between Edmund Burke and Paine), Mr. Foster nimbly side steps. And instead, we have a Burke who is reduced to a bumbling clown. Which does shocking disservice to our hero. Paine did not regard Burke as a clown. Why does Paul Foster? Paine discerned in Burke a formidable intellectual foe, and Paine's perception was emphatically correct. Burke's critique of revolution, despite its lapses into sentimental pieties, is still one of our most brilliant pieces of political analysis.

It was Burke, after all, and not Paine, who accurately predicted what would come of the revolution in France. (And recall, Burke solidly championed the American Revolution among other good causes.) One does not dismiss figures of his calibre so lightly, unless one is making propaganda. But propaganda 200 years after the event is absurd. And in any case, Tom Paine and the "right of revolution" tradition scarcely require the service of a propagandist.

Lost Synthesis

The play, it seems, amounts to righteous side-taking, without penetrating the issues at stake. One could say that such righteousness is the historical force which makes bloody revolutions inevitable. And doubtless something of this truth could be learned from a musing contrast between Burke and Tom Paine. William Q. Judge was more explicit, many years ago, when he urged Theosophists to learn the teachings of soul-evolution and self-sacrifice:

Theosophists, if they will learn the doctrine and try to explain it, will reform this world. It will percolate everywhere, infiltrate into every stratum of society and prevent the need of legislation. It will alter people, whereas you go on legislating and leaving this world's people as they are, and you will have just what happened in France. Capitalists in that day, in the day of revolution —that is the royalists—oppressed the people. At last the people rose up and philosophers of the day instituted the reign of reason, and out of the reign of reason—mind you they had introduced

there a beautiful idea of mankind, that idea struck root in a soil that was not prepared—came the practice of murdering other people by the wholesale until streams of blood ran all over France. So you see if something is not done to raise the people what the result will be. . . . If these old doctrines are not taught to the race you will have a revolution, and instead of making progress in a steady, normal fashion, you will come up to better things through storm, trouble and sorrow. You will come up, of course, for even out of revolutions and blood there comes progress, but isn't it better to have progress without that? And that is what the theosophical philosophy is intended for.

"Memoirs" of H.P.B.

The Theosophical Publishing House of Wheaton, Ill., an adjunct of the Theosophical Society, has issued in paperback form ($1.95) the work compiled by Mary K. Neff, *Personal Memoirs of H. P. Blavatsky,* first published in 1937. Great pains were taken by the editor to gather and sift material concerned with the life of H.P.B., found in a variety of sources, some involving previously unpublished material. The result is a fruit of conscientious effort, although for it to be called an "Autobiography of H. P. Blavatsky" seems either exaggerated or inaccurate, since one may seriously doubt that H.P.B. would have done or permitted any such thing herself. The resistance encountered by Mr. Sinnett in putting together his *Incidents in the Life of H. P. Blavatsky* is sufficient evidence of her feeling about what might suitably be given to the world concerning her life, and it seems certain that the reader unschooled in Theosophical philosophy will find some of the things recounted in this volume more bewildering than informing. If the book is now intended to popularize Theosophy as a philosophy of life, the venture seems a curious neglect of the counsels given by H.P.B. herself in regard to relations of Theosophists with the general public.

Not for Public Discussion

In her article, "What Is Truth?", she wrote:

Concerning the deeper spiritual, and one may almost say religious, beliefs, no true Theosophist ought to degrade these by subjecting them to public discussion, but ought rather to treasure and hide them deep within the sanctuary of his innermost soul. Such beliefs and doctrines should never be rashly given out, as they risk unavoidable profanation by the rough handling of the indifferent and the critical. Nor ought they to be embodied in any publication except as hypotheses offered to the consideration of the thinking portion of the public. Theo-

> sophical truths, when they transcend a certain limit of speculation, had better remain concealed from public view, for the "evidence of things not seen" is no evidence save to him who sees, hears, and senses it.

The mysteries of H.P.B.'s private life surely fall within considerations of this sort. While Miss Neff obviously endeavored to practice a meticulous scholarship, and sought, as is plain, to defend H.P.B. against repetition of old calumnies and attacks upon her good name, the inclusion of long passages by Colonel Olcott, as though he were as reliable a source as H.P.B. herself, might bring some confusion to readers. Yet the volume has been published and circulated for some thirty years, and it may in some instances prove of value, in the same way that other publications—never intended by the Founders to be spread broadcast before the world—may have been of some confirmatory use to readers whose grounding in the philosophy has made them secure against the puzzles of precocious material.

Sympathetic Harmony

A reader has supplied a quotation from Herbert Read in *The Grass Roots of Art* (Wittenborn, 1955) which aptly applies Platonic conceptions to the teaching of art:

> The point of view which I put forward, as against the whole grammatical and logical tradition of education, is the Platonic doctrine which finds in the practice of art those regulative principles in virtue of which the integration of the personality can be achieved. Art is a *natural* discipline. Its rules are the proportions and rhythms inherent in our universe; and the instinctive observation of these rules, which come about in the creative industry of the arts, brings the individual without effort into sympathetic harmony with his environment. That is what we mean by the integration of the personality—the acquiring of those elements of grace and skill which make the individual apt in self-expression, honest in communication and sympathetic in the reciprocal relationships upon which society is based.